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ABSTRACT

Discussed are ideas concerning the basic assumptions, the needs, and necessary future changes of special education. Social realities with which special education must cope are summarized: polarization of society, population growth, new expectations, the knowledge explosion, change in role and function of the family, depersonalization of behavior patterns, and economic limitations. Examination of the role of special education as related to the total social matrix of American life is urged, as is avoidance of separation from the mainstream of American education. Problems in special education pointed out include lack of personnel, use of categories or labels, definition of role and scope, and relationship to regular education. Alternatives, or possible solutions to some of these problems, suggested are rejection of the self-contained classroom as the basic model for special education, adoption of a multi-factoral model (similar to what is now called the resource room), and adoption of the total concept of the differentiated staffing process, which would provide for individualized education by abolishing special education labels and concepts such as grade level. (KW)

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A Tiger By the Tail: Dilemma For Special Education

Dr. Leonard T. Curtis

A vital concern of every program should be a periodic evaluation of its effectiveness in achieveing the stated goals of the program. This morning I shall attempt to examine some of the basic factors of special education in an attempt to start what I hope will be a full evaluation of special education by all of the concerned individuals in public education. Evaluation must provide for an examination of the basic assumptions of special education as well as evaluating the more outward achievements of special education.

Any evaluation is bound to be somewhat disconcerting and disturbing but one must remember that action only takes place when one becomes unhappy with currently existing conditions. Satisfaction tend to lead to acceptance of the status quo and thus one often fails to note factors that may later lead to the total destruction of an institution. Today it is my intention to deliberately disturb your homeostatic balance. It would be so easy this morning to talk in a pedantic manner about the problems of special education. Indeed that would be a most popular course. We must resist the inclination to rest on our past accomplishments. This morning I ask for you to do something that is infinitely harder than to attend to my comments in an intellectual fashion. Today it is my dream that we can start the ripple that will expand until it covers the total field of public education. It is so very easy to listen with the mind and then to placidly continue on ones prior path without any change. On the other hand we must not fall into the fault of blind generalizations that make one feel good but which fail to produce change. Today we must start a vital process that I call self-monotering. This must be done on two levels-

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the individual and the collective if effective social and individual social change is to ensue. In special education we are so proud of our sensitivity to the needs of children who are different, but I am afraid that often the scope of such sensitivity is very limited and fails to bring about essential changes in our own behavior. Self-monotering is dynamic process and is continuous. We must at all time examine our behavior in terms of the total experiential matrix in which we function. What I propose this morning is that we engage in a two-pronged effort to monoter ourselves individually but at the same time we must also set up appropriate mechanisms by which we may monoter the total field of special education. On a more personal note may I ask that you indue LDG me in my request to enter into the spirit of the morning. We must for a brief time forget the public facade with which we face the world. We all are such wonderful actors that we often succeed in convinceing ourselves that the front is real. For a few brief moments let us try to be as honest as it is possible in examining special education and its role in the world of tomorrow. In many ways we are all prisoners of culture and thus we so very often fail to see that there are other alternatives to choose. I make no pretense of having THE ANSWER. Such an attitude could only lead to failure. What I hope to do this morning is to cause those of us involved in special education to suspend our prejudices and inflexibilities in order that we may try to develop a more viable model of special education.

In my many years as a practicing psychologist I have had many clients who could clearly and correctly articulate their problems, but at the same time they were totally unable to act or to change their emotions or feelings or behavior. If we are to bring about the essential changes needed in special education we must change our "gut" feelings. We must feel and thus we may

finally make some of the moves that we must if public education is to be saved from total destruction.

America has a dream about education that is unique in world history. The dream may be stated simply as a belief that all American children can and should be provided with a public education designed to enable them to assume a functional role in the main stream of American life. This is still a dream as may be seen by a superficial examination of reality. Many children in American education evidently are not being provided with the needed skills, understandings, and attitudes as evidenced by the drop-out of approximately one fourth of the school age population before completion of the traditionally accepted high school graduation. One of the goals of special education should be to assume a leadership role in making the American dream a reality.

All dreams and roles, and programs must be examined in light of reality. As an aside may I postulate that the problem often is not what is real but what we think is real. Each of us seek to impose a particular shape and form on the random face of reality. It is not what is real that make us act, feel, or think but what we perceive as reality. All reality is basically the result of the interaction of our bio-chemical self and our experiences. It is probable that the interaction of these two factors result in a synergistic effect.

In spite of the idiosyncratic nature of reality it would appear that some general social problems may be seen as common to all concerned professionals. Special education in particular needs to be aware of the following social realities if they are to design programs that will meet the needs of the population they want to serve.

A social reality that special education must cope with is the increasing polarization of American society. The more a society splits over basic issues the more difficult it is to devise appropriate programs that will satisfy all of the members of that society. I wonder if special education could be of any assistance in this problem? This might be the theme of another conference.

A second social problem of concerns to special education is that of population. The population problem may be seen from several points of view. We are, of course, concerned as a nation with the problem of what has been called the population bomb. What is special education do to with so many children? As an aside we might note that special education is more likely to have more children refered for service simply because medical people are now keeping more people alive. Many children who would have died at birth will now grow up to become a part of special education. Another part of the population problem is the distribution problem. It seems that many more people have decided that the urban life is for them. This conference dealing with rural education might like to examine how we might make rural living a more viable alternative.

Such modern communication wonders as TV and radio have brought about profound changes in what people expect. There was a time when the poor could be somewhat ignored, but today all can see by way of TV how the more affluent part of America lives. Naturally there is what we might call an expectancy gap. It is perfectly natural to want what one sees others have. As for special education I am afraid that at times it is seen as a method of keeping the poor poor. Just look at the current cases in the courts of California and other places as proof of this. Again remember reality is individual not collective. Can special education

become an agent of change for the poor or will it continue to put lids on many children?

A most difficult problem facing society as a whole is the problem of what has been called the knowledge explosion. We are learning so much so rapidly that I am afraid that absorption time is all to brief. How do we select out from the constantly accumulating mass of data that which is most relevant to the problems at hand?

A most disturning problem in American life is the change in the role and function of the American Family. All education in general and special education in particular needs to be concerned with this problem. The changing scene in family life causes many anxiety in all parents, but parents of exceptional children have additional problems. Guilt, resentment, and confusion often accompany the birth of an exceptional child. What role will special education take in assisting parents to cope with their role as a parent?

As the pace of life increases there appears to be a tendency to accept a more and more depersonalized behavior pattern. Special educators above all people need to be aware of the relationship between depersonalization and behavior. Is it possible for special education to accept the challenge and provide some program which will assist people in coping with this problem?

In popular terms we might call the next problem the "economic crunch" problem. All education is suffering from the fact that there is not enough funds to do all of the things that one would like to do. Special education in particular has additional concerns in this problem as all of our programs tend to be more expensive and also we tend to serve a population which many might considered to be expendable. Might it be that the problem is not

totally one of lack of funds but that the public is using this as an excuse to express its dissatisfaction with current practices? If this is true, which I have a hunch is at least partially so, what can we in special education do to make all of education a more effective and valid experience?

Many more problems might be listed and discussed here, but time and energy will not permit further exploration. Perhaps we might say that the most basic and pervasive problem underlying all American life and indeed all human life on the planet is entitled change. May I recommend that all of you read a most disturbing book called "Future Shock" by Alvin Toffler.

The growth of special education in the United States has been phenomenal. In a little more than a hundered years special education has grown from providing services for a few residential inmates to a system of public school classes and institutions that serve children in all of the fifty states of the United States. Not only has special education grown in terms of numbers of children served but it has expanded to include most of the deviant populations. I would like to point out incidentially that I had hoped at this particular point in my talk to provide you with some detailed figures on the actual growth in various areas and categories. It seems that such figures are exceedingly hard to come by so this morning I shall have to stick to such commonly held knowledge that all of use possess that in each of our states the number of classes in special education has continued to grow with no end in sight. How conforting it would be if I could pause here and pat us on the back and say what wonderful people we are and how very successful we have been. I know that it is considered typically American to think that the bigger the better, but I hope that

this morning we will refuse to settle for such a superficial symptom of success. At this juncture may i simply point out that we may have grown in size because we have been satisfied to served as the dumping ground of regular education. Of course regular teachers are delighted for us to take problem children off their hands. Later on I hope to explore some possible alternatives that will hopefully provide a more solid base upon which to build the field of special education.

One of the failures of special education has been the tendency to act as though we were a field apart and that we had relatively few stakes in regular education. Our concerns must encompass the total society in which we live. We in special education must be vitally concerned with not only education in general but we must seek to examine the role of special education as related to the total social matrix of American life. Change is indeed a way of life and change does cause much unease in the souls of men. One way of putting the problem for special education and indeed for all education is that we are engaged in educating children today who must live in a world that we cannot even imagine. The paths leading into the future present so many alternatives that we all must stare ahead with fear and anxiety. A constant question must always be in our minds. What skills, understandings, knowledge, and attitudes will most be needed by the people of tomorrow? If we choose properly it is possible that the human race may yet survive, but if we choose on the side of the inflexible and rigid we may all yet perish. According to many Armageddon is upon us. I like to believe that we are indeed in a time of profound change but that rather than dispare we should rejoyce that now perhaps we of the human species may be able to rise to the force of change and master it with the result that life

will not merely become tolerable but that it may be one in which all mankind may join the affluent society. Let me hasten to add that by the affluent society I am not merely refering to the material factors which are needed but to the factor that is called by many the quality of life. We need to devise a society that will not produce "Hollow Men" as so beautifully described by T. S. Eliot. Change is opportunity. Special education has always proved itself on developing the divergent thinker. Can we now lead the way by act as well as by verbalizations to provide for American school children those essentials to cope with the world of temorrow even though we know not what it might be?

I can hear many in the audience say, yes that is all very well but what about special education? I have presented this introductory statement as an attempt to start what I call the process of integration. I know that the term integration has many meanings, but here I am refering to the tendency to many in special education to adopt clannish attitudes. I have tried to point out that we must not separate ourselves from the mainstream of American education. However, it may be that we now should turn to some very specifics of special education and some possible solutions.

In terms of the number of children served special education has been a great success. We do indeed serve more and more children every year, but how well do we serve them? The writings of Lloyd Dunn and G. O. Johnson indicates that we do not always do too well. I am well aware that all critism should be tempered by more careful research, but I doubt that any of you who have visited many special education classes have been satisfied. In addition we perhaps should ask ourselves some hard questions here. What are the reasons for the rapid growth of special education? If we are not providing a really adequate program what do we get more requests for our

services? May I suggest that part of our success in gaining more clients lies in a very sad fact. Most teachers of the children in America's public schools do not want to be bothered with children who present problems. May it be a fact that any program that simply removed problem children from the regular classroom would be popular? Another searching question we in special education must ask ourselves,"What is the effect of taking a child from a regular classroom and placing him in a special classroom"? Is it true that placing a child in a special education classroom tends to be a one way street to oblivion as far as any hope of return to the main stream? What is the psychological effect of placing a label on a child where we call him mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed? Are the present evaluation techniques used to place children in special education classes appropriate for all populations? Current court cases would suggest some need to examine this part of our program. Is the IQ used to place a ceiling on a child or is it used to serve as a minimum base from which to depart? Incidentally may I suggest that the term IQ is abused. Indeed many teachers seem to treat the IQ as though it has some sort of real existence as some independent unity. At the risk of insulting you intelligence may I reinforce your knowledge that there is no such thing as an IQ. It is a construct. In reality it is merely a mathematical ratio between a person's chronological age and his mental age. May I also point out that the term mental age is not at all sacred. Again this is a concept which should serve to assist a teacher in where to start but in no case should any measurement be used to place limits on what a person whould be able to do. All measurements should be treated as a score plus X which is always unkown. Teacher exceptancies must not place a ceiling on a child's potential. Special

education teachers must learn to be more sophisticated in using evaluation as a tool for improving instructional procedures.

A very great problem in special education lies in the fact that there is a tremendous lack of fully qualified personnel to care for all of the children who need their help. May I point out that part of the problem lies in the model used by special education to educate exceptional children. A brief examination of the potential number of children possible to be cared for by special education makes the self-contained classroom for all exceptionalities would result in at least the need for training 500,000 special educators. The cost in terms of money and effort make such an idea absurd. More to the point, we in special education must be very clear in our minds as to what type of model we are training our teachers to serve in tomorrow.

A very large problem in special education is the category problem. What is wrong with the use of the current category system? For a brief moment let us examine some of the underlying assumptions of such a system. First the use of a label tends to stop thought. How often have you heard a teacher say after hearing that a child is retarded or emotionally disturbed. Oh now I see why he cannot learn to read. In other words when we place a child in a category we tend to assume that all occupants of that category possess a common characteristic. Ask yourself if that is true. Are all mentally retarded alike even in terms of their specific needs in learning academic subjects? What about the emotionally disturbed who are much alike? Do they respond to the same method of teaching reading? Are they all in need of the same emotional assistance? Such questions reveal the total inappropriateness of the current category system plus the fact that

"real" people refuse to stay in nice, neat, aseptic little cubicles. What happens to the child who is both called mentally retarded and blind or emotionally disturbed and deaf? Later we will explore some possible alternatives to the current category system.

A crucial problem in special education is the role and scope of special education. Historically special education has constantly added categories of exceptionality as time has passed. Is it not time to look at this problem in a more exacting manner and see if we can agree on just who and in what manner will we serve them? Later we will explore this problem in terms of some possible delimitations of the scope and role of special education.

Perhaps the biggest single question facing special education today is the problem of our relationship to regular education. Where do we fit into the total scheme of American education? Have we tried too long in the backwaters of education? How may we in special education better communicate with the rest of education? Does special education have any possibilities of serving as a leader in the current battle to save education from its many detractors? These and many other questions need to be answered if we in special education are to not wither on the vine. Some suggested solutions will be made later.

It is all too easy to criticize special education, but to destroy without suggesting some facts which may help rebuild is fruitless and even harmful. Fault finding is all too common, but essentially what I have tried to do thus far in my presentation is to sensitize us to some of the very grave problems faceing us and all of education. Now perhaps we should examine some possible alternatives. Again may I state that these suggestions are not meant to be exclusive or all inclusive. Now is the time for all of us

to make an analysis of the problem and then to suggest where we go.

The fact that we have been successful in growing in number and scope is very understandable from a historical point of view. There was probably nothing wrong in doing what we did when we did it. It is so easy to criticize a game after it is played. The only factor we must always remember is that times have changed and that we must not solve problems by use of simple historical solutions. I am afraid that often we are guilty of asking the wrong question. Not only has the answers changed but the questions that need to be asked perhaps have altered over the past few years.

At the time special education was created the self-contained classroom was the basic and indeed generally the only model available to meet the educational needs of children. The fact that special education grew because of what has been called the relief philosophy is very understandable. It was easy to see that many children were being excluded from school because of special problems such as mental retardation or blindness. The regular teacher has been consistent in having a lack of enthusiasm for teaching the different child. The special educator felt that all children should have an opportunity to learn in school so special education was born. I am afraid that one unconscious motivation of special education has been that of helping "that poor little child". It is now realized that such motivation is not appropriate but rather that while the exceptional child may differ on some dimensions that they in reality are always more alike the rest of children than they are different. Again special education has suffered from a tendency to over protect the exceptional child. Probably one of special education's most persistent behaviors has been to literaly believe in the educational cliches of educational philosophy. Indeed special educators have tried to give life to such concepts as:

We must start where the child is; all children have diginity; instruction should take into account individual differences and many more. This is to credit of special education and perhaps we should openly ackowledge that we indeed intend to put life into the old and tired cliches.

In light of current research and knowledge it is time that special education adopt a different basic model for special education. The self-contained classroom as the basic mode of instruction must go. Indeed I feel that not only must the self-contained model go for special education it must also go for all education. The self-contained model is based upon error in terms of human learning and in terms of the teacher abilities and needs. Does it not strike you as odd that elementary teachers are treated in such a fashion that they do not even have time to go to the rest room during the regular school day? What about the assumption that the elementary teacher can be trained to be all things to all people? How to provide for individualization of instruction with one teacher in one room with the same children all day? In special education the self-contained classroom leads to the placing of labels on children that sear the soul. How would you like to be known as stupid or crazy? The self-contained classroom in special education also tends to serve as a permanentleaving of the main road of education.

What can we do to replace the self-contained classroom? Let me hasten to state that what I suggest will not happen overnight, but might we not take a leaf from behavior modification and set up a series of successive approximations by which we may reach the ultimate goal? I do not propose that we abolish all self-contained classrooms immediately or possibly ever. What I do propose is that special education adopt a

multi-factoral model. Such a model should provide services for all children in light of existing realities. At the present time it is probable that special education will need to keep the self-contained classroom for the trainable retarded child and for the psychotic. With these two possible exceptiona and for a time maybe with the blind or deaf it is proposed that we start to develop a model that will not cause the the child tobe totally separated from his friends or peers. Such a model to start with might be something on the order of what is now called the resource room. The resource room works on the basic assumption that the basic responsibility for all children must and should lie with the regular classroom teacher. However, the resource room also provides for assisting the regular teacher to cope with the problems engendered by the exceptional child. If such a model is adopted the bulk of special education teachers will need to have rather different training in the teacher education institutions than they now have. Much research indicates that a critical problem in making the resource model effective is the attitude of the regular classroom teacher be trained to work with her peers as well as learning how to cope with many types and ages of children. The resource teacher also needs to be taught how to work with parents. Parents of exceptional children need extra understanding and assistance if the total educational program is to achieve its maximum.

The resource room makes it possible to assist children with learning problems without separating them from the main stream of public education. One of the major problems in the past has been that children shunted into special education self-contained classes have had severe problems in making re-entry in the regular classroom. The resource room is not a final solution to the problem of educating children. Any society should

constantly seek to develop more adequate modes of educating its young. The resource room should properly be viewed as an intrim arrangement on the way towards some educational goals that as yet remains out of sight.

The problem of the resource room is closely bound up with the problem of categorical placement of exceptional children in the current self-contained classroom. The resource room makes it possible to largely discard the system whereby we label children as mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed or learning disabilities. It is difficult in light of current knowledge and especially in light of current social attitudes of minority groups that special education should continue to employ a model of education that basically limits a child. One would think that the total work of Arthur Combs and others in the area of self-concept had never been. How can we continue to advocate a plan of education that starts in a manner that tends to destroy ones self-concept? The resource room places no onus on the child. Perhaps I should point out that I am advocating a non-categoriacl type of resource room. Yes, I am aware of the many problems involved in devising a type of room whose basic assumption would be that the only qualification for entry into a resource room would be that the child needs assistance to meet the problems of learning the necessary skills, understandings, and knowledges to survive in a very complex society.

To properly define the role of the resource room would take far more time than I have available this morning. We in special education should hold a conference devoted entirely to the problems of the resource room and other alternatives to the self-contained classroom. Such a conference could explore the many needs of children in today's world and prehaps could propose concrete methods by which we might start to make a definite plan

of action. Of course the problem is sticky and even very controversial, but since when did special education shy from the advocation of controversial solutions. Some one must take the lead.

As I stated earlier the resource room is only one of the many steps we must take in trying to provide a more adequate solution to the problems of exceptional children. Earlier I indicated the need to study the problems involved in relating special education to the total field of education. Again I am only proposing one possible solution, but if we start with the condition of regular education today I feel that we must find a plan of action that will help to lead all of education out of a dead-end style of education.

Regular education is under acute attack in all areas of the United States. Tax elections fail with a monotonous regularity. Indeed schools have been closed for lack of funds. Schools are under attack by every segement of society. It would seem that no major element of the American Society of today is satisfied with current conditions. The proposals for solving educational problems range from complete abolition of public education as a social institution to the selling of our total educational system to the giant corporations. It should be obvious that we cannot much longer delay doing something. The hour is very late and the conditions are poor, but what I am in essence proposing is that special education make a shift in its emphasis for a time and that special education stop assuming that somebody else will take the leadership role in devising solutions for current educational problems. Who in education is better equipped that special education to serve as a binding agent? Yes, it would be so very easy to say that special education has too much to do in its own area of emphasis. May I suggest that this is akin to the attitude of "let George do it?" It has been my experience that there is

no George. John Donne put it very well when he stated that we should not send to know for whom the bell tolled, but that in reality it is always tolling for each and every one of us. May I suggest that it is barely possible that one reason we shy away from assume leadership is that we are afraid that we may lose a separate identy? May it be that many in special education feel so involved in a vested interest that they cannot see that such an attitude can only result in total disaster? Indeed one of the most thoughtful proposals for meeting some of basic criticisms of current educationa will result in a total recasing of the role of special education. This idea has been called by several names, but is probably best subsumed under the total concept of the differientated staffing process. Here we have a plan that will meet head on the basic faults of the self-contained classroom. Here an attempt is truly being made to propose a plan that will provide for a totally individualized program of education. Not only would special education labels have no place in such a scheme, but even such silly concepts as grade level will be abolished. Even more daring children may be working on many different levels in many different subjects. Again this ideal calls for a total recasting of the role of the teacher. In my opinion the single greatest problem in American education is the teacher. I am not blaming her as she is but a symptom of a social system that has been allowed to proliferate in all directions without any thoughts being given as to where it might end.

A number of years ago a great orator William Jennings Bryan made of famous oration in which he advocated that America was crucifying its citizens on a cross of gold. Today both special education and regular education are

crucifying their children on crosses. In the case of special education we are guilty of crucifing the exceptional child on the cross of categorical thinking while in regular education we have long crucified our children on the cross of grade level.

Both of the above concepts muct go. They fail to match reality. We in special education must look the random face of reality straight in the eye and then do what must be done. Differential staffing calls for an even greater change in the role of the teacher. For example one of the major problems in changing current educational methods is the teacher's basic concept that she is involved in an imparting role. The majority of teachers seem to picture themselves standing in front of a class telling students about facts. Such an image of one self in the instructional process does great violence to what is known about the environment in which learning most efficently takes place. I propose that the role of teacher be changed from that of imparter of facts to the role of facilitator of learning. In other words the teacher should devise materials, methods. and environments in such a fashion that will most fully provide for each child to learn in his own manner and at his own rate. One of the great advantages of the differential staffing approach is that it more or less forciceably forces the teacher to change her role. No longer will the teacher even have her own room and no longer will she function in isolation. All decisions as to instructional proceedures and curriculum will come about as the result of a team effort. I am well aware that much anguish will be involved as change comes hard. Drastic conditions call for radical methods. Nothing less than the survival of public education as we understand it is at stake.

As radical as differential staffing sounds and it is especially drastic as far as the role of special education is concerned. It is probable that

the role of the special education teacher in the differential staffing plan would be basically that of a highly trained consultant and expert on child learning especially as concerned with learning of children who are now classified as deviant or exceptional. There will always be the child who does not respond to standard approaches and here is where it is possible for the special education to take a very effective role. I also see the special education once again leading the way in being on the frontier of knowledge. For many years the bulk of teachers will need great assistance if they are to make the transition to a different way of education.

How far into the future should we attempt to see? It is always a very dangerous thing to cast oneself in the role of prophet, but perhaps I might venture a guess as to one possible change beyond differential staffing but involving it in a total change. I am refering to a new concept called the educational park. Here on one grounds would be placed all of the facilities for education of all children of a given area. The age range might even stretch from two year olds to junior college. Such a system voids much of the current problems of segregation and cultural bias. Such a plan also calls for a total community participation in a new philosophy of education as a lifetime process. Also involved would be a frank facing of reality in that the day care center would become an integral part of the total educational plant. The educational park would provide all types of assistance for adult learning from retraining for a new job to poetry or foreign language. Such learning centers would be located in such a manner as to stretch over many racial and economic areas of a city or country.

At the present moment special education has already in existence some possible bridges with regular education that might make the change into a new mode of education easier. I refer to the who area of special education

called learning disabilities as one of the cross over types of proceedures. Learning disabilities flourishes on the idea of assisting teachers with helping normally intellectually functioning children into a more appropriate learning mode. This division of special education has in many school districts opened the regular classroom to concepts of special education. To a lesser extent the field of the emotionally disturbed also serves as a crossover area.

In addition to the above bridges to regular education, I am going to propose that special education examine very carefully the possibility of once again adding to its scope in terms of the types of children served. In the past special education has cared for the orphan often simply because no one else would assume any responsibility for it. I have no desire to create another category or to build an empire, but there are two great areas of education where no one appears to be taking an effective role. The two areas are the culturally different and the slow learner. I can hear cries of anguish as I suggest that we take on such an impossible task in terms of shere numbers, but may I hasten to add that it is not being suggested that we create yet another type of self-contained classroom but that rather we use the considerable knowledge at our disposal to stop the crimes that present education is perpetuating on these two type of children. The numbers are indeed frightening as we may be talking about as many as ten million children. Look at the reality of lost children and lost talent as well as the fact that human diginity is being ignored for a very sizable portion of our children. Can we in special education simply turn our heads in light of the great need? Do we have the courage to look at the problem and then see what

might be done? Can we assist children to complete enough education of the proper type so that they will not be labeled as inept and lazy and so on for the rest of their lives?

This morning I have attempted to present some ideas concerning the needs of special education. It is probable that many people in special education will view these suggestions as calling for the abolishing of special education and indeed that I have asked for such drastic changes in all education as to make schools almost unrecognizable in terms of the school they attended, which has not been my intention. An examination of the current world cannot but lead one to the inevitable conclusion that somewhere along the way education in general and special education in particular have failed to properly read the signs of change and thus we all stand in the most serious danger of our existence.

Many authors and agencies are writing about what education should do. What I am basically proposing is that we in the field of education arise to the needs of society and that we devise and institute the appropriate methods. We must not lose sight that what should be most concerned about is the need for all children to have a type of education that will enable them to live the more adequate life. The quality of life must be the concern of all in education. Special education must not be afraid of losing their identity but rather we must be happy that change offers us the greatest of opportunities to create a system of education that will be a wonder to behold. We so need to assist our children in acquiring values that will enable them to not be alone in a sea of change. We so need to learn to communicate with one another. We should remember that communication is always a two way street. Can we in special education meet change or will we drag our feet? I am betting on special education to not only accept change but to glory in it

and to turn change into opportunity for bringing into fruition that great American Dream that all American children will have the best of education so that all may have a share in the abundance of life.